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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the nature and extent of English curricula and resources available for English language learning in Taiwan's universities. Data were drawn from a survey of 18 coordinators of English programs for non-English majors (EPNMs) in Taiwan universities and from examination of course descriptions. Results indicate that all universities offered freshman English courses, most focusing on general language skills. After the freshman year, only two universities required students to take English. However, 16 institutions did offer electives, offered through the general education centers, EPNMs, foreign language and literature departments, or the students' own colleges and departments. The courses focused on general language skills, literature, and English for special purposes. In many cases, number of courses offered and enrollment were small. Only four EPNMs offered advanced laboratory courses after the first year. Outside the classroom, there was very little provision for additional language exposure or individualized assistance for special learning difficulties, but some extracurricular English-language activities were available. It is concluded that enhanced curricula and resources are needed. (MSE)

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English Curricula and Language Learning Resources for Non-English Majors at universities in Taiwan

by

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May 1997

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English Curricula and Language Learning Resources for Non-English Majors at universities in Taiwan

Abstract

In the past, very little research has been conducted to describe the English curricula offered for non-English majors at universities in Taiwan and the resources available to them for language learning. Thus, these universities were unable to share information about what they do so that they can learn from one another. The purpose of this study is to report the English courses and language learning resources available to non-English majors at a large number of universities with a view to opening up a forum for discussion about whether a rich environment has been provided for students to learn English in Taiwan. Eighteen EPNM (English Program for Non-English Majors) coordinators at universities were interviewed in the 1995 academic year, and the interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Documents describing the courses offered at these universities were also collected. The findings show that all the universities offered Freshman English courses, most of which focused on general language skills, to freshmen. After the freshman year, only two universities required students to take English. However, 16 universities did offer electives to make up for the lack of opportunities for students to study English beyond the freshman year. These courses were offered through the General Education Centers, the EPNMs, the Departments of Foreign Languages and Literature, or the students' own colleges and departments. The courses focused on general language skills, literature, and English for Specific Purposes. However, in many cases, the number of courses offered was small and enrollment was limited. In addition, only four EPNMs offered advanced lab courses after the freshman year. Outside the classroom, there was also very little provision for students who desired additional language exposure or individualized assistance for special learning difficulties. This lack of provision was made up partially by the extracurricular English-language activities held at the universities. The findings of this study point to the need for universities to enhance their curricula and resources for language learning.

Introduction

At each of the universities in Taiwan, the English language courses for non-English majors are mainly offered through programs called English Programs for Non-English Majors (EPNMs). The major responsibility of the EPNMs is to offer the Freshman English (FE) course, which is required for most non-English majors. In many cases, the EPNMs also offer English courses at a more advanced level than FE. Other university bodies at some universities may offer English courses, too, as additional avenues for students to acquire language skills.

Since English is widely used in businesses, industries, and other settings, university graduates with a high level of English proficiency enjoy a great advantage in job hunting. To prepare students for their future careers, the universities have been revising their programs to help students learn English. Even though a few universities offer only Freshman English and nothing else, other universities have been expanding the curricula for students beyond the freshman year. Some of them also provide resources for students who wish to further their language skills outside the classroom. Knowledge about what kinds of English programs are implemented and what resources are accessible to students to facilitate language learning at the universities can be very helpful to program planners and teachers in their design of language courses for universities and to researchers in their investigations of the language learning situations in Taiwan. Therefore there is a need for descriptive studies that provide such information.

The research questions for this study are as follows.

1. What kinds of English curricula are offered at universities in Taiwan for non-English majors in the freshman year?
2. What kinds of English curricula are offered at universities in Taiwan for non-English majors beyond the freshman year?
3. Besides language courses, what resources can students use to further their learning of English

at universities?

The purpose of this study is to report the kinds of language programs and resources available to students at universities in Taiwan. It is hoped that teachers and program coordinators will use this information to plan their programs.

A Review of the Literature

The English programs implemented at universities in Taiwan have always been a concern for researchers and teachers. Some studies have been conducted to give overviews of certain programs to provide EPNM coordinators with useful information for designing their programs. However, very few researchers have attempted to describe the types of courses offered and the resources available to students who want to learn English outside the classroom and those who need special attention to their learning difficulties.

Haakenson et al. (1992) introduced the FE course implemented at Tunghai University in the 1992 academic year. They described the overall and specific goals of the program and the approaches to teaching recommended by the program. They also introduced the syllabi, textbooks, major classroom activities, tests, and grading systems adopted by all teachers. Chang (1987) described the FE programs implemented in the College of Foreign Languages and Science and the College of Engineering at Fujen University. She reported the development of the program and made an evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. She also mentioned the placement tests, teaching methods, and teaching materials used in FE courses and the language skills emphasized in these courses. Kuo et al.(1990) introduced the FE program at Chiaotung University and discussed the class grouping method and teaching materials used, the language skills taught, the satisfaction level of students and teachers with the program, and the language skills in which students felt they had improved most. In another study, Lin et al. (1996) described the differences between the teaching objectives, teaching methods, teaching materials, and learning assessment methods used at Chengchi University before and after 1993. Chang (1995) made a bold attempt to describe all the FE programs implemented in Taiwan in 1994. In her report, she mentioned the class grouping methods used, the language skills emphasized, class sizes, the placement tests used and the nature of the FE courses offered, (i.e., whether students were allowed to choose among a variety of FE courses). The above studies have provided some general information about the language programs implemented at Taiwan's universities.

So far, only two studies have examined the types of courses, in terms of course content, offered for freshmen or students beyond the freshman year. Lin (1994) reported two types of FE courses offered at Chengchi University. The first type, called General English, focused on general language skills and was offered for the majority of the students. The second type, called Advanced English, was offered for the top 20% of the students (as determined by a placement test) and included three courses: English Conversation, Journalistic English, and English Reading. Chang (1992) investigated the courses available to students beyond the freshman year at Fujen University. This University has had ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses since 1982. In 1992, Journalistic English, Business English, and English for Studying Abroad were offered in the College of Foreign Languages, and Business English, English for Studying Abroad, and Ecology English were offered in the College of Natural Sciences.

The two studies mentioned above have limited their scope to describing either an aspect of the curriculum (i.e., ESP), or an individual program. So far, very little research has described the types of courses offered to students throughout their four years at the universities or attempted to survey a large number of universities in Taiwan. In addition, no researchers

have looked at the resources offered to students who want special help for language learning or additional language exposure outside the classroom. A comprehensive study that involves a large number of universities and provides the above information is needed. The present study serves to address this gap in the research literature.

Methods

There were 20 universities in 1995 in Taiwan. In this study, the researcher studied only 17 of these universities, excluding the three normal universities. This was because the researcher wanted to investigate the programs implemented at universities which serve a general purpose; teachers' universities, which aim specifically at training teachers, might have a different focus. Normally each university had one EPNM. However, Fujen University had two, one for the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Fine Arts, and the other for the Colleges of Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, and Life Science. Therefore, the 17 universities studied had 18 EPNMs. In this report, each of these programs is referred to by the name of the university where it was offered. These programs were Soochow, Fujen (A) (for Colleges of Liberal Arts & Fine Arts), Fujen (F+S) (for Colleges of Foreign Languages, Natural Sciences, and Life Science), Taiwan U. (the National Taiwan University), Chinese C. (Chinese Culture University), Chengchi, Tamkung, Central U. (the National Central University), Chungyuan, Tsinghua, Chiaotung, Tunghai, Chungcheng, Providence, Fengchia, Chunghsing, Chengkung, NSYSU (the National Sun Yat-Sen University).

In order to understand the programs offered at the 17 universities, the researcher interviewed the 18 coordinators in charge of the EPNMs. The interviews were conducted during the 1995 academic year; the conversations were tape-recorded and transcribed. Documents about the courses offered by the programs were also collected. In writing this report, to make sure that she had presented her data accurately, the researcher sent the first draft of the Results and Discussion section of this report to the 18 coordinators for confirmation. Based on their feedback, the draft was revised. This method, called insider checking, was recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983).

Since the purpose of this study is to share information about the English Programs at 17 universities, this report remains largely descriptive and the researcher's interpretations are kept to a minimum.

Results and Discussion

The following discussion focuses on three elements: (1) the courses offered for non-English majors in the freshman year, (2) the courses offered by both the EPNMs and other university bodies for students beyond the freshman year, and (3) the resources available to students who needed special attention to their learning difficulties or additional language exposure outside classes.

FE Courses

The 18 programs could be divided into two types according to the content of the FE courses they offered. The first type offered only one kind of course that focused on general language skills in both semesters. The other offered a combination of courses for students to choose from in one or both semesters, some general language skills courses and others content courses on specific topics.

1. General English (in both semesters)

Eleven programs fell under this category. They were Soochow, Fujen (A), Fujen (F+S), Chinese C., Chengchi, Tamkung, Chungyuan, Tunghai, Providence, Fengchia, and Chunghsing. Teachers in these programs appeared to believe that a general language foundation was important for freshmen. For example, in Soochow, all the FE courses aimed at general language training. However, in two programs, the content of the FE course offered for each college or department was somewhat different, although all the courses focused on general language skills. In Fujen (F+S), Conversation was offered to the College of Foreign Languages, Reading and Conversation to the College of Natural Sciences, and Reading to the College of Life Science. In Fujen (A), students from most departments took an FE course called Freshman Reading and Writing in both semesters. However, students from the Music Department took Conversation in addition to Freshman Reading and Writing in the second semester, even though they took the same course as students from the other departments in the first semester.

2. A combination of general English and content courses on specific topics (in one or both semesters)

Seven programs were in this category: Taiwan U., Central U., Tsinghua, Chiaotung, Chungcheng, Chengkung, and NSYSU. Examples are provided below.

Taiwan U.: There were four types of FE courses for students to choose from: Reading and Writing; Reading of Literature; Contemporary Thoughts in the Humanities; and Journalistic English. Individual teachers decided what to offer and the courses were scheduled to allow all the colleges to have the whole range of courses.

Central U.: Students chose among four courses: Journalistic English, English of Current Events, Literature Appreciation, and Conversation. Some of these were for one semester and others for two. Teachers offered courses according to their specialization. Before 1994, only one type of FE course was offered. In 1994, the program started to group six or seven departments together and offered the above courses for students to choose from. Some of the courses were about literature, and each of them focused on a particular theme (e.g., death, love). According to the coordinator, in the fall of 1996, the EPNM planned to evaluate how students liked these themes and add some others.

Tsinghua: In the first semester, all students took an FE course that focused on general language training. In the second, they chose among three content courses: Short Stories, English of Current Events, and Drama and Theater. It was hoped that the students would gain exposure to various cultures by studying topics in the humanities and thus enhance their appreciation for life and the arts. In addition, by getting students interested in the themes offered in the various courses, the program hoped to increase students' motivation to study English. The themes offered were chosen by individual teachers, who based their decisions on their expertise. The rationale behind this was that teachers would be more effective if they taught topics they liked. Each year before the second semester started, teachers wrote up course proposals for a committee to evaluate.

Chiaotung: The main focus of the FE course was language skills. There were two sets of two-credit courses, a total of 14: (1) basic English courses: English Listening Comprehension, English Conversation, English Composition, and English Reading Comprehension; and (2) advanced English courses: Current Issues, Practical English Composition, English for Science and Technology, Journalistic English, Listening Comprehension for Academic Lectures, Oral Report Skills, Oral Communication Skills, Business English, Literature Appreciation, and Practical Listening Comprehension. Freshmen were required to take any two courses from these two sets. However, in practice, they were advised to take basic courses. Some advanced courses specified preference for juniors and/or

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seniors. (As of 1996, students were required to take two basic English courses in their freshman year and advised to take at least one advanced English course or courses in another foreign language later to fulfill the language requirement of a minimum of six credits. The rationale behind this was that after taking basic English for a year, students would know better what kind of advanced English or foreign language courses they needed.)

In the past, an FE course which incorporated the four language skills and carried four credits per semester was offered, as regulated by the Ministry of Education (MOE). At that time, teachers were overloaded by this FE course and therefore not able to offer other courses. After the 1993 MOE mandate to reduce the FE credits to three per semester, teachers were finally able to offer a variety of courses which carried fewer credits, such as those offered in 1995. Many teachers found this to be a refreshing change because they felt that the same FE course they had been teaching for many years did not pose enough challenge for them.

Chungcheng: There were 11 one-semester courses to choose from: Conversation, Journalistic English, Prose Reading, English Through Poetry, Appreciation of Western Literature, Short Fiction Reading, Drama and Theater, Oral Practice, Composition, Practical English, and English Audio-Visual Training. Students were supposed to take two of these to fulfill the FE requirement, but they were free to take more.

Chengkung: Students had three courses to choose from: College English, English of Current Events, and English Reading and Writing. Individual teachers determined which one to offer.

NSYSU: There were three two-semester courses to choose from: Reading, Conversation, and Journalistic English. Individual teachers decided what to offer and each year the combination of courses was different. There had always been a strong demand for conversation courses, but few were offered each year, due to a lack of interest in these courses among teachers.

Four or five years ago, teachers at NSYSU met to discuss whether they should offer a unified FE course. However, some teachers objected to the idea and decided on the curriculum implemented in 1995. Most teachers were content with this decision.

As shown above, the majority of the FE programs (61%, 11 out of 18) offered one type of FE course that focused on general language training. This may suggest that these programs believed in providing the same curriculum for freshmen, which meant administrative convenience for the coordinators and lighter loads on teachers who might be able to use the same teaching materials for all the classes they taught. However, more than one third of the programs (39%, 7 out of 18) offered a variety of FE courses for students to choose from, showing these programs' belief in offering choices to motivate students to study. In such programs, teachers' and students' interests in the courses to teach or take played a more important role than in the previous type of programs.

As mentioned above, 11 programs offered an FE course that focused on general language training, indicating these programs' emphasis on general language skills. In the other seven programs that offered a variety of FE courses, a total of 42 courses were offered. Of these, 20 (48%) focused on general language skills, 11 (26%) ESP, 10 (23%) literature, and 1 (2%) philosophy. Apparently, general language skill courses were the largest part of the courses, indicating that these programs also recognized the importance of a general language foundation.

ESP courses were the second most frequently offered courses in the seven programs that offered a variety of FE courses. The most popular topics were Journalistic English, English of Current Events, and Business English. English for Science and technology was offered by only one program. Clearly, the variety of ESP courses available was very limited. Students in fields such as medicine, biology, engineering, and law would certainly benefit from ESP courses

in their specific areas, but unfortunately, these courses were not provided. This might have been the result of EPNM teachers' lack of expertise required for these courses, since the large majority of them received their degrees in literature, language teaching, or linguistics. (According to the researchers' NSC project report NSC85-2418-H-029-003 titled "Toward a Comprehensive Freshman English Curriculum," among the EPNM teachers at the 15 universities surveyed, 44.9% specialized in literature, 23.1% in language teaching, 18.1% in linguistics, and 13.9% in other areas.)

Compared with ESP courses, literature courses seemed to cover a larger variety of topics. Among the 10 courses offered, 4 were general courses on literature appreciation, 2 on drama, 2 on fiction, 1 on poetry, and 1 on prose. This clearly had to do with the fact that teachers with a literature background constituted the largest part of the FE teachers.

According to the 18 coordinators, at least four programs had changed from offering one type of FE course which emphasized general language training to offering several content courses. These programs were Taiwan U., Central U., Chiaotung, and Chungcheng. In Chungcheng's case, its program had gone through many changes before it settled on the one implemented in 1995. In 1992, all the freshmen took an FE course that focused on conversation one semester and writing the other. In 1993, students took a course that integrated reading, conversation, and writing. In 1994, students still took a course called FE, but the teacher for each class was free to decide what to teach. Finally in 1995, teachers decided to offer a large variety of FE courses for students to choose from, with each focusing on a particular topic (e.g., Prose Reading), believing that this would motivate students to learn. Another example is Taiwan U.. In the past, all students at this university had to take one type of FE course, too. However, five or six years ago, teachers decided to offer various courses for students to choose from. A dramatic increase in students' motivation to learn and an obvious drop in the absentee rate were reported in response to this change.

Compared with the situation of a decade ago, when most programs offered only one type of FE course focused on general language training, the curricula implemented in 1995 clearly reflected more diversity. Besides the four programs that had already switched into offering a variety of courses, one more program (Chinese C.) indicated that it would do the same in the 1996 academic year. There seemed to be a trend for the programs to offer students more choices. Teachers and students are beginning to have even more freedom in the shaping of the FE curricula. This may reflect the fact that the programs had felt the need to give teachers more freedom in what courses they offered and students more say in what courses they took.

The Freshman Lab course was part of the FE course in some EPNMs but not in others. In Soochow, Tamkung, Chungyuan, Tsinghua, and Tunghai, students taking FE had to take Freshman Lab at the same time. In Chinese U., Fengchia, and Chengkung, Freshman Lab was a required course separate from FE. In Fujen (A), Fujen (F+S), Chengchi, and Chunghsing, it was also a separate course but the students' own departments decided whether it was a required or elective course. In Taiwan U., Central U., Chiaotung, Chungcheng, and NSYSU, it was an elective separate from FE. In Providence, no lab was offered in the freshman year at all. Thus, in the 18 programs, Freshman Lab was handled in very different ways.

English Courses Offered Beyond FE

Some programs offered courses for sophomores, juniors, and seniors, either as required or elective courses.

English Courses required beyond FE.

Only two programs, Fujen (F+S) and Providence, required students to take English courses beyond FE. In Fujen (F+S), students in the Spanish, German, Japanese, and French Departments in the College of Foreign Languages took Reading (2 credits/hours per semester) in the sophomore year. Students in the French and German Departments took Reading and Writing (2 credits/hours per semester) in the junior year and Research (2 credits/hours per semester) in the senior year. In the College of Life Science, sophomores took Conversation (1 credit/2 hours per semester). All the above courses lasted two semesters. In Providence, students who were admitted to the university beginning in the fall of 1995 were required to take ESP courses (2 credits/hours per semester) offered by their own departments in the junior year and English courses offered by the General Education Center (2 credits/hours per semester) in the senior year. These courses were also for two semesters.

There could be several reasons why only two programs required students to take English courses beyond FE. One reason may be that English was not considered important by university administrators. Another reason may be that teachers in the EPNMs were so overloaded with FE classes that they were not able to offer other courses. Providence was an exceptional case in which the president of the university played an important role in the English education of the students. According to the coordinator of Providence, the president believed that English was extremely important and he actually designed the EPNM curriculum for students who came to the university beginning in 1995. In Fujen (F+S)'s case, the university has always had a tradition that stresses the study of foreign languages. It used to require students from the College of Foreign Languages to take 20 credits of English (courses of their own choice) and those from the College of Natural Sciences to take four credits of reading in the freshman year and another four credits of conversation in the sophomore year. Even though the EPNM reduced the course requirement for students in response to the 1995 MOE policy to reduce FE credits, such a requirement was still more than what students from other universities had to fulfill.

Elective English courses beyond FE.

Even though students at many universities were not required to take English courses beyond the freshman year, they had opportunities to take elective English courses if they wanted to. These electives were offered by three different bodies within the universities, as shown in Table 1.

The electives mentioned in Table 1 were offered by the following school bodies.

1. FLLD: 9 programs

In nine programs students could take electives offered by the FLLDs: Taiwan U., Tamkung, Central U., Tsinghua, Chiaotung, Chungcheng, Chunghsing, Chengkung, and NSYSU. Some examples are given below.

Taiwan U.: Students could take the following courses: Composition, Research Writing, Practical Business English, Literature, and Culture. Not many students took these courses because some students did not even know about them. However, one course was very popular and had more than 300 students enrolled.

Chunghsing: Students could take Interpretation, Advanced Writing, Conversation, Speech and Debate, Business English, and Journalistic English. They could also take courses offered by the Creative Writing Program at the university, which trained students to write in either Chinese or English. These courses included Theory of Creative Writing, Poetry Writing, Novel Writing, and Play Writing. These classes had very small enrollments, averaging 5 to 10

Table 1
Elective English Courses for Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

	School body offering courses beyond FE	Types of courses offered besides those offered by FLLD
Soochow	General Ed. Center	Lit./culture
Fujen (A)	No courses offered (students allowed to take EPNM courses offered by Fujen (F+S))	NA
Fujen (F+S)	EPNM	General language skills, ESP, Lit./culture
Taiwan U.	General Ed. Center, FLLD (mainly for English majors)	Lit./culture
Chinese C.	None	None
Chengchi	None	None
Tamkung	FLLD (mainly for English majors)	None
Central U.	FLLD (mainly for English majors)	None
Chungyuan	Respective colleges	General language skills, ESP
Tsinghua	FLLD (mainly for English majors)	None
Chiaotung	EPNM, FLLD (mainly for English majors)	ESP
Tunghai	General Ed. Center, EPNM	General language skills, ESP, Lit./culture
Chungcheng	FLLD (mainly for English majors)	None
Providence	EPNM (for students entering university before 1995)	General language skills, ESP, Lit./culture
Fengchia	EPNM	General language skills, ESP, Lit./culture

Chunghsing	General Ed. Center, EPNM, FLLD (mainly for English majors)	General language skills, Lit./culture
Chengkung	FLLD (mainly for English majors)	None
NSYSU	FLLD (mainly for English majors)	None

Note. Ed.=Education; lit.=literature; FLLD=Foreign Languages and Literature Department.

students. Only students with a good command of English were admitted.

Chiaotung: Students from the Management Science Department could take Business English Conversation (though not regularly offered).

Tsinghua: Students could take courses classified as Areas of Foreign Language. These courses were English Oral training I and II, English Lab, Currents Events in English, English Composition, English of Science and Technology, and Journalistic English. In 1995, the sizes of these classes were not large enough to be problematic for teachers since some students did not know about these courses. However, the coordinator was concerned that in the future more students might enroll and the class sizes might become too large. His second concern was that some of the students enrolled might not have a high enough proficiency for these courses, particularly those students who were admitted to the university without taking the JCEE (which screened out low-level students).

Chengkung: Non-English majors were not able to take language courses offered by the FLLD for English majors, such as Conversation or Writing. However, they were allowed to take content courses, such as Shakespeare, if the class sizes were not too large.

NSYSU: Language courses offered by the FLLD for English majors, such as Writing, Speech, or Conversation, were not open to non-English majors. However, with instructors' permission, non-English majors could take any content course.

2. EPNM: 6 programs

Six EPNMs offered electives beyond the FE course: Fujen (F+S), Fengchia, Chunghsing, Tunghai, Providence, and Chiaotung. The courses offered are listed below.

Fujen (F+S): For each college, a different set of courses was offered. The electives for the College of Foreign Languages, offered with a minimum of 10 students, were English Recitation and Pronunciation, English Writing, Vocabulary Learning, Training in Listening, Business English, Journalistic English, Reading of Short Stories, Introduction to Linguistics, TEFL Methods, Understanding Grammar, and Advanced English Conversation. The electives for the Colleges of Natural Sciences and Life Science were Everyday American English, Practical English Grammar, Practical English and Pronunciation, Practical English Vocabulary, Basic English Listening, English Grammar and Reading, and English Letters for International Trade. These were offered with a minimum of 15 students. Students had the priority of taking courses offered particularly for their own college. Students from Fujen (A) could also take these courses when there were spaces in the classes for them.

Fengchia: The electives were offered for students who had finished the FE and Freshman Lab courses. These electives were classified into five types: (1) Practical English, (2) Intermediate Reading, Advanced Reading, (3) Business English, (4) English Writing I and II, Research Report Writing, and (5) Public Speaking, Translation: Theory and Practice, and 20th century American Plays.

Chunghsing: Sophomore English (focusing on developing general language skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening) was offered. In the future, the EPNM may set up a Continuing Education Program to offer English classes for people outside the university and students in Chunghsing who have low proficiency. As of 1996, the curriculum had not been determined yet, but it might include general language courses in listening, speaking, writing, and basic grammar as well as courses in other foreign languages. The program will also consider offering courses requested by students (e.g., ESP).

Tunghai: The following 3-credit courses were offered: Practical English, Performance Arts, Authentic English for Various Situations in Life, English Through Film, Modern English, and News Reading. Each year a different combination may be offered.

Providence: For students who entered the university before the fall of 1995, six 2-credit electives were offered in the first semester, one for each college: English Grammar and

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Listening, Reading Strategies, Appreciation of Novels and Movies, English for Travel, Writing, and Business English. Six more were offered in the second semester: Journalistic English, Business English, English Novels, Training in Listening, English for Travel, and Appreciation and Analysis of Drama and Theater. Students could take these courses in any year and there was no limit on how many courses they could take. In the fall of 1995, a new president who was very interested in the EPNM curriculum proposed that all non-English majors finish a 16-credit English program during the four years at the university. This was approved by the University Council (Shiao-Wu-Wei-Yuan-Huei). Therefore, students who entered the university after the fall of 1995 were required to take eight credits of English beyond Freshman English and Sophomore Lab.

Chiaotung: Ten advanced English courses were available for students who had fulfilled the FE course requirement: Current Issues, Practical English Composition, English for Science and Technology, Journalistic English, Listening Comprehension for Academic Lectures, Oral Report Skills, Oral Communication Skills, Business English, Literature Appreciation, and Practical Listening Comprehension.

3. General Education Center: 4 programs

In four programs, students were able to take electives offered under the General Education Centers, which were taught mostly by teachers who were faculty members of the FLLDs. These programs were Soochow, Taiwan U., Tunghai, and Chunghsing. Taiwan U. offered Modern Drama, Studies of Gender and Culture, Contemporary Culture Studies: Theory and Practice, Appreciation of Major Western Plays, Feminism, and The Best of Shakespeare. Chunghsing offered Appreciation and Analysis of English and American Poetry. Soochow offered Novels. Tunghai offered Appreciation of English and American Short Stories and Introduction to Women's Studies.

4. Respective colleges: 1 program

Chungyuan was the only university in which all colleges worked together to plan English courses for non-English majors. The courses were offered based on the respective needs of its four colleges. Most of the courses offered were ESP. Among the four colleges, the College of Business had the most ESP courses, with each department offering its own. An example is Business English. Half of the departments in the College of Engineering also offered some. An example is Writing for Science and Technology. However, there were few in the Colleges of Natural Sciences and Design. Besides these courses, students could take a summer course in the US: American Language and Culture, which was jointly offered by Chungyuan and an American university. The curriculum implemented in the four colleges was organized by coordinators from these colleges.

In addition, in at least eight universities, some of the students' own departments offered ESP courses to prepare students for using English-language textbooks in the study of their major subjects. These universities were Fujen (A), Chinese C., Chengchi, Tunghai, Chunghsing, Chungcheng, Providence, and Chengkung. These departments hired their own teachers or teachers from the FLLDs to teach these courses. For example, at the Chinese Culture University, the Business Department hired an FLLD teacher to teach Business English, and the Physical Education Department hired a teacher of its own to teach English for Physical Education. In Fujen (A), students from the Physical Education Department were able to take English Terms for Physical Education from a teacher in their own department, and students from the Library and Information Science Department could take a course on the reading of English articles in the field of library and information science from one of their content teachers. In the case of Providence, in 1997 the various departments will begin to offer ESP for students entering the university beginning in 1995.

As shown above, with the exception of students at Chinese C. and Chengchi, students at

all the programs surveyed were able to take elective English courses offered by the FLLDs, General Education Centers, or the EPNMs after they finished the FE course. The courses offered by the FLLDs were usually in the areas of literature, linguistics, or general language skills. Those offered by the General Education Centers or the EPNMs usually dealt with language skills, literature/culture, and ESP. In addition, students from some universities were able to take ESP courses offered by their own departments. Therefore, most universities in Taiwan did provide opportunities for students to further their language skills after the freshman year.

Advanced Lab Courses

Advanced lab courses were offered after the freshman year either as a required or elective course by some programs.

1. As a required course: 3 programs

Only three programs offered advanced lab as a required course: Soochow, Chengchi, and Providence. In Soochow, Sophomore Lab was offered as a 1-credit/2-hour course offered by the Language Center. Students were divided into three levels according to a placement test. Teachers teaching each level chose their own teaching materials and designed their own syllabi and mid-term and final exams together. However, individual teachers could use additional materials of their own choice as supplements. In Chengchi, Lab II was offered as a 1-credit/2-hour course for sophomores in the Accounting Department. The teaching materials used in this course were chosen by the teacher teaching it. In Providence, all sophomores who entered the university beginning in 1995 were required to take Sophomore Lab as a 0-credit/1-hour course for two semesters.

2. As an elective: 3 programs

Three programs offered advanced lab as an elective: Soochow, Chengchi, and Chiaotung. In Soochow, Advanced Lab was offered to juniors and seniors who had obtained acceptable grades in their Sophomore Lab classes. In Chengchi, Lab II was offered as a 1-credit/2-hour elective course for sophomores, juniors, and seniors in all the departments but the Accounting Department. The teaching materials used were chosen by individual teachers. In Chiaotung's case, Advanced Lab was offered as a 2-credit/2-hour elective.

In one program, NSYSU, the EPNM would offer lab courses as electives on request from students beyond the freshman year. In addition, students could take the lab course offered by the FLLD mainly for English majors.

As discussed above, only 4 of the 17 universities surveyed--Soochow, Chengchi, Chiaotung, and Providence--had advanced lab for students after the freshman year. It appeared that advanced lab courses played a very minor role in the curricula for non-English majors beyond the freshman year. This was perhaps a result of the lack of lab facilities, which were very expensive, at many universities. As the researcher understands, the labs at the majority of the universities were heavily used by students taking the Freshman Lab course, which was required for most freshmen. At some universities, the lab facilities for even the Freshman Lab courses were insufficient, let alone those for Advanced Lab courses.

Programs for Students with Special Needs

The programs offered in many EPNMs may not meet the needs of students who have special difficulties, such as extremely low language proficiency levels in certain aspects of the English language or mismatches between students' learning styles and teachers' ways of teaching. It is therefore necessary for the universities to provide assistance to students with special needs.

However, very few universities had provisions for these needs in 1995. Soochow was the only university that set up a center called the English Clinic for students with problems in grammar and pronunciation. This clinic was staffed by volunteer teachers from the Language Center at the university and operated separately from the EPNM. Fengchia was the only university that had an English tutoring program. Students, faculty, and staff were allowed to go to a tutoring center in groups for help in language learning. Foreign exchange students learning Chinese at the Chinese Language Center at this university worked as tutors four hours per week: two hours to help students conduct small group discussions for language practice, and two hours to edit students' papers, business letters, etc. People seeking this service could see any tutors of their own choice. This program had been in existence for at least ten years and had been quite successful and heavily used. Fengchia also required all full-time EPNM teachers to provide four hours of advising each week for students in the program. Students were allowed to sign up to see any teachers they chose, not necessarily those who taught them.

Programs such as those set up at Soochow and Fengchia universities should be very helpful to students. However, only two of the 17 universities surveyed had them. This clearly indicated that there was room for improvement in the provision of assistance to students with special needs at most universities. The lack of such provision might have been a result of the lack of personnel since many EPNM teachers had heavy teaching loads. It could also have been because non-English majors' language needs have never been taken very seriously by the MOE, as indicated by the fact that the guidelines provided by the MOE on the English education for non-English majors have always addressed only the FE courses and nothing else.

Audio-Visual Facilities and Computer Programs for Language Learning

All the EPNMs used audio-visual facilities to assist language learning. These facilities were usually provided by (1) the FLLDs, (2) the EPNMs, (3) the AV Centers in certain colleges, or (4) the AV Centers or Language Centers for all students at the universities. The facilities available usually included audiotape players, videotape players, TV sets, CD players, laser disk players, overhead projectors, opaque projectors, and videocameras. Teachers and students used these facilities for in- or out-of-class language activities. Chengchi was the only program that had a section in the university's AV Center, called "Study Area," for FE teachers to keep copies of audio and visual tapes for students in their classes to use.

As far as high technology is concerned, Fengchia was the only program that used computer-assisted language learning programs (CALL) to help students learn English. In the university's Audio-visual Center, a multimedia computer software program called "Bilingual Multimedia English Oral Training System" was installed to help students develop listening and speaking skills. With this program, students practiced language by writing scripts, watching plays, and performing plays, etc. Another program called "Zebra CALL" connected students in their computer labs with teachers in their offices on the Internet. Through this program, teachers monitored students' learning.

As discussed above, it seemed very common for students to use the more traditional types of audiovisual facilities such as videotape players, overhead projectors, or audio-cassette players in their learning. However, more advanced technology such as CALL was used at only one university. One of the reasons why CALL was not widely used could be that it required expensive software and hardware which many universities did not have. Another reason could be that many EPNM teachers did not have training in using CALL, since most of them received their degrees in subjects other than language teaching. (According to the researchers' NSC project report mentioned earlier, among the EPNM teachers at the 15 universities surveyed, 44.9% specialized in literature, 23.1% in language teaching, 18.1% in linguistics, and 13.9% in

other areas.) For these reasons, full integration of CALL into the EPNMs may not happen soon.

English-Language Activities Outside the Classrooms

At many universities, English-language activities were held outside English classes to help students develop proficiency. Students were free to participate in these activities, which were held by certain divisions of the universities or student clubs or associations, as shown in Table 2.

As the table shows, at eight universities, university-wide English-language contests or presentations were organized officially by the FLLDs, Language Centers, EPNMs, or Extracurricular Activities Divisions of the universities. Students were encouraged to participate in these activities, most of which were in the form of speech, play, recitation, singing, or writing contests.

A good example is Chungyuan. Every year a speech contest was held in the first semester and a play contest in the second semester. Both activities received much attention. The play contest was videotaped and the tape was kept in the Audio-Visual Center for interested students to watch. The winning teams were asked to present their plays again for freshmen entering the university the next year. Teachers even collected outstanding plays and wrote them up as teaching materials for future classroom use. These plays were compiled and published as a book after careful editing was done. Each year new winning plays were added to this book.

Another example is Providence U.. Every year in the past, the Extracurricular Activities Division of the university organized the Emerson Writing Contest, a national contest initiated by the president of the university and open to any students at any universities in Taiwan. It also organized speech and storytelling contests regularly. The FLLD organized translation, play, singing, and poetry reading contests as well as the Renaissance Week, which featured recitation and play contests. Students who participated in activities sponsored by the FLLD were mostly English-majors, but non-English majors were welcome too.

In addition, at eight universities, similar language activities such as play and speech contests were held unofficially by student clubs or associations. An example is Central U.. The student clubs organized speech, recitation, and play contests every year. Students in all departments signed up for the play contests and FLLD teachers unofficially involved themselves by serving as judges for these contests. The FLLD often gave money or prizes to winners to show support. Another example is Chinese Culture University. In 1995, a student club organized speech contests and the FLLD teachers also served as judges.

As shown above, in 14 out of the 18 programs (78%) surveyed, students interested in practicing English outside their English classes were able to join activities in the form of speech, play, recitation, writing, and singing contests. In 8 of these 14 programs (57%), these activities were official and organized by certain divisions of the universities. On the other hand, in eight of them, these activities were unofficial and hosted by student clubs or associations. Out-of-class language activities seemed to be a popular way for students to use English. Unfortunately, these official or unofficial activities for practicing their language skills were not available to students from four programs (22%)--Soochow, Fu-jen (A), Fujen (F+S), and Tunghai.

Conclusions and Implications

A few conclusions can be drawn from this study. Eleven of the 18 programs surveyed offered one type of FE course that aimed to develop general language skills, with the rest of the

Table 2
University-Wide English-Language Activities

	University-wide language activities (organizing body)
Soochow	none
Fujen (A)	none
Fujen (F+S)	none
Taiwan U.	play presentations (student club)
Chinese C.	Speech contest (student club)
Chengchi	Speech, poetry recitation, writing contests (FLLD)
Tamkung	Speech contest (FLLD)
Central U.	Speech, recitation, play contests (student club)
Chungyuan	1st semester, univ.-wide speech contest; 2nd semester, play contest (Language Center); Speech, play contests (student club)
Tsinghua	Speech, play contests (student club)
Chiaotung	Speech contest (FLLD & EPNM)
Tunghai	none
Chungcheng	speech, play contests (FLLD Student Association)
Providence	Emerson Writing Contest; speech, storytelling contests (Extracurricular Activity Division of university); Renaissance Week; translation, play, singing, and poetry reading contests (FLLD); speech contest (student club)
Fengchia	1st semester, speech contest; 2nd semester, recitation contest (student club)
Chunghsing	Speech, story recitation, singing contests (FLLD & Extracurricular Activities Division of university)
Chengkung	Speech, play, singing contests (FLLD, with help of student clubs)
NSYSU	play contest (FLLD)

programs offering a variety of courses for students to choose from. In general, the content of the courses offered showed that apparently most programs still believed in the importance of building general language competence for non-English majors in the freshman year.

The courses offered by the programs that gave students choices included general language courses and content courses on specific topics in ESP or literature/culture. Close to half of these courses focused on general language skills, indicating again an emphasis on general language proficiency. As far as the variety of topics covered in content courses is concerned, there was a larger variety of literature/culture courses than of ESP courses. The topics of the latter were mostly limited to news and business. It appeared that the FE courses were not intended to prepare students for studying the English-language textbooks they used in their major areas of study.

In 1995, only two programs required students to take English courses beyond FE. This may indicate that few programs believed that they should require students to take English courses after the freshman year or that most programs had difficulty offering required English courses. However, students at 16 universities were able to take elective courses after the freshman year offered by the General Education Centers, the EPNMs, the FLLDs, or the students' own colleges. The courses students could take from the FLLDs were usually in the areas of general language skills, literature, and linguistics. The courses the General Education Centers and EPNMs offered dealt mostly with general language skills, literature/culture, and ESP. However, the courses offered were few in some cases and also enrollment in courses offered by the FLLDs was usually limited. In addition, students at two universities did not even have access to these courses at all. To a certain degree, the lack of courses was compensated by the ESP courses offered by students' own departments. However, there still were not enough opportunities for students to take English courses after the freshman year.

As far as advanced lab courses are concerned, only 4 of the 17 universities surveyed--Soochow, Chengchi, Chiaotung, and Providence--offered them for students after the freshman year. These courses clearly played a very small role in the curricula for non-English majors.

Besides offering language courses, the EPNMs did not seem to do very much for students who needed additional help outside the classroom. Soochow was the only program that set up a clinic for students with problems in grammar and pronunciation. In addition, Fengchia was the only one that established an English tutoring program for students who needed individualized assistance and also required all its full-time EPNM teachers to contribute four hours a week outside of their teaching to advise students who requested assistance . This clearly indicates that there was room for improvement in the provision of guidance to students with special needs in most programs.

As far as audiovisual facilities are concerned, most programs did have traditional equipment such as videotape players, overhead projectors, and audio-cassette players for language learning. However, regarding higher technology, computer language learning programs were used in only one program, Fengchia. Apparently computer-assisted language learning was rarely used in the EPNMs.

To a certain degree, the above-mentioned lack of opportunities for language exposure outside the classroom was compensated by the extracurricular English-language activities held at the universities. In 14 (78%) of the 18 programs, students who were interested in practicing English outside their classes were able to take part in English language activities in the form of speech, play, recitation, writing, or singing contests, as well as play presentations. Students in 8 of these 14 programs could attend activities organized by certain divisions of the universities; however, students in eight of the programs were able to benefit from events hosted by student clubs or associations.

This study has a number of implications for teaching. First, the EPNMs should expand

their curricula for students beyond the freshman year. Programs which have not offered any courses besides FE should definitely design a curriculum for sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Universities which have not offered any courses through their General Education Centers or have had very limited offers should also work toward this direction. Allowing non-English majors to take English as their minor field is another way to equip them with English language skills which may be useful for their future careers. In addition, the range of courses offered should be broadened. For example, innovative and practical courses such as English Through Films, Translation, and Interpretation could be offered. Finally, more ESP courses could be taught and these courses should be diversified to cover topics that have rarely been covered, such as Medical English, Legal English, Engineering English, etc.. EPNM teachers should be given training to teach ESP courses or collaborate with content teachers to teach these courses.

Besides courses, other elements can be incorporated to give students additional exposure to language or special assistance in language learning. Since many students are computer-literate now, computer-assisted language learning programs could be provided to give students opportunities to learn English outside of class. Clinics or tutoring programs could also be set up for students who need individualized assistance in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Universities with graduate programs in TEFL, linguistics, or English and American literature could arrange for students from these programs to serve as tutors. In addition, the EPNMs or other university bodies should organize activities such as language games, contests, or plays to allow students opportunities to practice English outside the classrooms.

Future researchers could investigate a few areas which this study did not delve into. For example, the sophomores, juniors, and seniors could be asked whether their universities offer enough English courses for them to take and what kinds of courses they would like to take (e.g., courses on general language skills, ESP, literature, or others). Researchers may also examine the possibility for EPNM teachers to co-teach ESP courses with content teachers. There is also a need for studies which describe the kinds of ESP courses offered by university bodies such as the General Education Centers and individual colleges and departments at universities.

It is hoped that more investigations into the English programs in Taiwan will be conducted in the future, so that the MOE, university administrators, EPNM coordinators, and teachers will have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the programs already implemented. In this way, the universities will be better able to meet the English language needs of Taiwan's students.

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